

Summary of the doctoral dissertation

„Underutilization of Spain's labour resources in the age of globalization”

written under the scientific guidance of

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Today, as a result of uninterrupted technological progress, we are confronted with numerous economic, social and environmental problems. A very serious threat to the stability of economic structures is the imbalance in the economic sphere, a problem which manifests itself in the increasingly visible and widespread phenomenon of unemployment. It often enforces the need to take measures to inhibit the growth of the number of unemployed and to counteract its negative effects. The condition of the labour market is also significantly affected by other factors, which are mostly random and difficult to predict. One of them is undeniably the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally changed the existing labour market model by making remote working mandatory in many areas of the economy. Another factor is the expanding impact of globalization on the current reality in economic and social spheres with many opportunities for change, but also risks in some domains.

The phenomenon of globalization and the assessment of its effects have been widely discussed in the research work of academics from various scientific disciplines over the years. Elzbieta Krynska in *Globalization and the Labour Market* [in:] Wisniewski Z. (ed.) *Managing Human Resources in the New Economy* clearly states that globalization is "the disappearance of borders and geographical barriers in the context of the flow of goods, services, capital, investment, technology, information, increasing interdependence between countries, acceleration of global interactions, the extensiveness, profundity of trade and financial ties between enterprises and economies." This broad description provides a comprehensive look at this phenomenon, which affects economies, politics, culture and entire societies in an extremely complex way. In doing so, it is worth noting that the impact of globalization on the labour market can be both positive and negative.

In the current economic reality, companies can without major problems move their headquarters to places that are more attractive to them both in terms of location, applicable tax regulations or attracting employees. Tangible benefits are then recorded by those countries to which production facilities and companies are relocated. At the same time, the effect of

globalization is an ever-increasing level of competition. Companies that want to stay in the market are often forced to pursue an active policy and cut costs as much as possible, thereby reducing employment and making redundancies. In consequence, the direct effect of globalization is a change in the structure of the labour market visible on many levels. Accompanying this phenomenon, technological advancements are reducing the demand for many professions and occupations. The high cost of labour and the huge competition on the national and international market have intensified this effect. Unfortunately, many negative trends can be observed, which generate problems not only in economic but also in social terms, both on a local and global scale. One of these is that experienced workers are leaving the labour market and retiring early, something that does not always mean a job opening for potential young workers. The way individual countries deal with the impact of globalisation on the labour market determines citizens' quality of life and level of socio-demographic development.

Spain in particular is one of these countries, where high levels of unemployment have been a problem for many years, with the country's economic situation and social mood negatively reflecting this. Young people, uncertain of their future and unable to cope with the modern reality, are falling into addictions and facing with countless problems. The sphere of poverty is growing and the social marginalisation of the population is clearly visible. There is a socially unfavourable situation in which a generational imbalance exists and the senior population is forced to support their adult children. This causes definite discomfort in the lives of both age groups and amplifies the effect of living in constant uncertainty about the future. Based on the available literature, as well as on my own statistical research using data published by the Statistical Office of Spain and by Eurostat, the dissertation presented here will attempt to assess and explain the causes of the high levels of unemployment. The problem under discussion is extremely important in this country, as it has a strong impact on the level of almost all economic indicators reflecting socio-economic development.

The choice of Spain as an area for consideration and detailed analysis is not accidental, as for years this country has been facing the problem of unemployment on a different scale and in a different form than other countries of the European Union. The noticeable regionalisation affecting the cohesion of the country and the unfavourable demographic situation must be taken into account. Spain is extremely diverse, both in terms of culture, traditions and economic situation. Each region is at the same time an autonomous community, the so-called *Comunidades Autónomas*, which has autonomy in such matters as education or taxation. The result of this heterogeneity is the country's high attractiveness to tourists, as well as the extreme difficulty of trying to standardise the rules for the implementation of various reforms. Spaniards

first encountered a serious labour market problem, namely high unemployment, between 1975 and 1985. Prior to this, the level of people out of work was less than 4%, but the situation worsened considerably during these ten years. Unemployment at the time was already over 21% and had become a serious problem for the government of the day. The political transformation led to the liquidation of many jobs. After 1985, there was significant growth in GDP and market development, but unfortunately unemployment remained very high. The country's next major economic crisis took place between 1992 and 1994, and although it was short-lived, the consequences were enormous. The unemployment level at that time was over 24%. In 2022, the level of unemployment in Spain was no longer so great, but it was still high at 12.4 per cent, and yet in many industries there was still a shortage of workers with sufficiently high qualifications and the required skills. On the other hand, however, Spain, in comparison with other European Union countries, ranks first in terms of the over-education of the workers, indicating that many Spaniards are accepting jobs below their qualifications and competences. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted existing problems and has contributed, among other things, to an increase in the number of people out of work. Undoubtedly, it is important to draw attention to the transnational nature of the problem of labour market instability and to relate it to the increasing impact of globalisation on national economies, which is one of the objectives of the dissertation undertaken in the context of the Spanish labour market.

The dissertation consists of four theoretical chapters and a fifth research chapter. In the first one, the labour market and the related problem of unemployment are extensively discussed based on literature studies. The causes and consequences of unemployment and forms of counteracting it are presented. The second chapter discusses the phenomenon of globalisation and ways of measuring it. In addition, the chapter was expanded to include the issue of globalisation in the context of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. A complementary subject, included in the presented dissertation, relating to the labour market and globalisation is the appearance of a new group called the precariat. This topic is further developed in one of the subsections of chapter two. Chapter three of the dissertation, on the other hand, focuses on two problems that are strongly visible in the labour market today, namely the problem of NEETs and underemployment. The growing group of NEETs, i.e. young people not in education, training or employment, is an increasingly serious problem throughout the European Union. As the published data indicates, the NEET phenomenon is particularly acute in Spain. The problem of underemployment, however, which refers to a situation in which the actual level of employment does not equal full employment, fits well with the research topic undertaken and is therefore described in detail in chapter three. The characterisation of the Spanish labour

market was carried out in the fourth chapter, where also the challenges faced by Spain today in terms of problems resulting from high levels of unemployment were indicated.

The thesis analyses in detail two issues: the impact of globalisation on the Spanish labour market and the problem of the level of unemployment specific to the country taking into account demographic characteristics, i.e. age groups and gender of the unemployed. The available empirical material is the basis for a series of detailed analyses using statistical and demographic measures and models. Based on the results of the research, an attempt is made to confirm the veracity of the hypotheses formulated in the study.

The main objective of the paper is to present and evaluate the labour market in Spain, with a focus on the variation of parameters characterising this market by gender and age. Particular attention will be paid to the groups of labour market participants referred to as 'disadvantaged', namely women under 25 and over 50 years of age, as in their case the availability of work is considerably limited. A factor significantly influencing the structure of the analysed labour market is the globalisation process and its different variations in the economic realities specific to different countries. For the purpose of the study, a main hypothesis and two specific hypotheses were formulated.

Main hypothesis

The age and gender of a potential employee are elements that determine employability.

Specific hypotheses

1. Globalisation significantly determines the labour market situation in Spain.
2. Women under 25 and over 50 in Spain are at greater risk of joblessness and employment problems than other labour market participants.

As mentioned above, the subject of the study was the labour market situation of people from the so-called border age groups, i.e. young people (under 25), that is, those just entering the labour market, and older people (over 50), taking into account the impact of globalisation processes visible in Spain.

The analyses of parameters characterising the condition of the labour market made it possible to formulate relevant conclusions. The first of these confirms the hypothesis that globalisation significantly determines the labour market situation. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent need to remodel the way work has been done to date has further highlighted the international dependencies that affect the labour market in countries

around the world. In addition, strong migration processes are evident in Spain, with both an inflow of citizens of other nationalities and an outflow of Spaniards and Spanish women who seek work outside their own country. Hypothesis two that women in marginal age groups are particularly at risk of unemployment was also confirmed. At the same time, a slight change in indicators is apparent, with a tendency for employment levels to rise and unemployment rates to fall at the same time. This means that women are getting better at finding their way in the labour market and their employment levels are increasing year on year. However, regardless of the overall trends, there is still a very strong segregation in society based on gender. Still in some regions, women are mainly employed in low-skilled jobs, which directly affects the salaries they receive. A very high proportion of women is also employed on a temporary basis especially in sectors characterised by strong seasonality, such as tourism and hospitality. The verification of the specific hypotheses allowed to draw a conclusion on the main hypothesis, confirming that the age and gender of a potential employee are elements that determine their employability.

The dissertation concludes by summarising the findings on the impact of globalisation on the Spanish labour market. In addition, recommendations for further research are identified which, given the dynamically changing situation in global markets, may lead to further interesting conclusions.